

Companion to Alternate Assessment Criteria, Most Significant Cognitive Disability Definition and IEP Team DecisionMaking Flowchart

This document is a companion to the Alternate Assessment Criteria; Most Significant Cognitive Disability Definition and the IEP Team Decision-Making Flowchart that will assist IEP teams in making appropriate decisions regarding student participation in Nebraska's Student Centered Assessment System - Alternate Assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (NSCAS-AA).

IEP teams must use various types of data when reviewing a student's eligibility to take NSCAS-AA. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Multi-disciplinary reports (MDT)
- Cognitive Ability Assessment
- Adaptive behavior skills assessments, checklists and inventories
- Benchmark academic assessments
- Present levels of academic functional performance
- District-wide assessments
- Diagnostic assessments
- Assistive technology evaluation
- Speech and language assessments that determine expressive and receptive language communication status
- IEP progress data on goals and objectives
- Formative academic assessment data
- Informal assessment data
- Transition assessment data
- Progress on functional, daily living and life skills
- Data from researched based interventions
- Sensory and/or motor assessments describing access modes for communication, fine and gross motor skills

Evidence for the decision to participate in the NSCAS-AA is **NOT BASED** on:

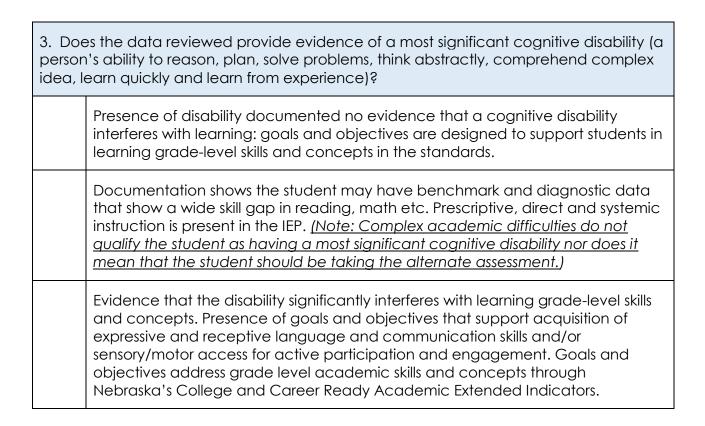
- 1. Specific disability or label
- 2. Poor attendance or excessive/extended absences
- 3. Native language/social/cultural or economic differences
- 4. Educational environment or instructional setting
- 5. Percent of time receiving special education
- 6. English Learner status
- 7. Academic and other services the student receives
- 8. Low reading or achievement level
- 9. Anticipated disruptive behavior
- 10. Anticipated emotional duress
- 11. Administration decision
- 12. Impact of student scores for accountability system
- 13. Expected poor performance on the general education assessment
- 14. Need for accommodations (e.g., assistive technology; augmentative and alternate communication AAC) to participate in the assessment process

NOTE: Intelligence quotient (IQ) scores are not a reliable measure for determining eligibility as many of the assessment tools used to determine IQ are not fully accessible for learners with the most significant motor, communication and sensory complexities. Educators should never use IQ scores in isolation to determine eligibility.

Review the student's IEP and related documents/documentation to answer the following questions.

1. Doe	es the student have a current IEP?
	NO. Stop here. Student is not eligible for the alternate assessment.
	Yes. Continue evaluation.

2.	2. Review the student's IDEA disability category.		
		IDEA disability category does <u>not</u> include intellectual or cognitive impairment as a characteristic.	
		IDEA disability category <u>does</u> include intellectual or cognitive impairment as a characteristic.	



4. Does the student's data document a significant deficit across all domains of adaptive behavior? Does the student require systemic, direct instruction of adaptive behavior skills? Adaptive behavior refers to an individual's ability to apply conceptual, social and practical skills in everyday life.

Conceptual skills: receptive and expressive language, reading, writing, etc., money concepts, self-direction.

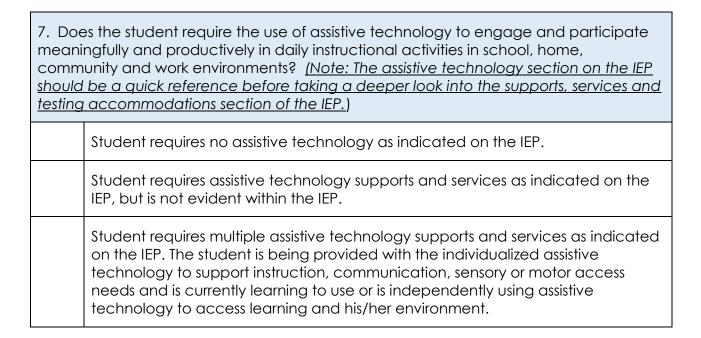
Social skills: maintaining interpersonal relationships, understanding emotions and social cues, understanding fairness and honesty, obeying rules and laws.

Practical skills: daily living activities such as: personal activities - eating, dressing, mobility and toileting; instrumental activities - preparing meals, taking medication, using the telephone, managing money, using transportation and doing housekeeping activities; occupational skills - maintain employment, work under supervision, cooperate with coworkers; maintaining a safe environment.

	NO instruction needed in any adaptive skills.	
	General instruction needed in one or more domains of adaptive skills, which are covered in district core instruction initiatives, Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) and/or Multi-Systems of Support (MTSS).	
	Prescriptive, systemic, direct instruction needed across many or all adaptive skills within each domain.	

5. Does the student participate in grade-level instruction with learning targets aligned to Nebraska's College and Career Ready Academic Extended Indicators with integrated supports and outlined on the IEP?
 Present levels of performance on the IEP indicates that the student's skills are aligned to the Nebraska College and Career Ready Academic Standards.
 Student's IEP goals and objectives are aligned to the Nebraska College and Career Academic Ready standards. Instruction includes intervention and accommodations that are provided to the student to be able to access grade-level content.
 Student's IEP includes present level performance statements that link student's grade-level access to the extended indicators. Goals and objectives are based on data determined needs and linked to the extended indicators for instruction, interventions and accessibility.

mate	. Does the student require individualized accommodations, access features and naterials beyond those provided through Universal Tools and Accommodations as utlined in NSCAS Accessibility Manual?		
	Student's IEP does not state any specific accommodations, supports, services and/or materials that are required for access to assessment.		
	Student's IEP outlines some accommodations, supports, services and/or materials that are required for access to assessment as outlined in NSCAS Accessibility Manual. (Note: Complex academic difficulties alone do not qualify the student as having a most significant cognitive disability nor does it mean that the student should be taking the alternate assessment.)		
	Student's IEP outlines individualized accommodations and supports beyond those provided through universal tools as outlined in the NSCAS Accessibility Manual to meet the communication, motor and/or sensory needs of the student and provide them the opportunity to demonstrate what they know.		



Considering participation in the NSCAS-Alternate Assessment: To be eligible for participation in the NSCAS-AA, all responses should fall in the bottom box for all questions. Only a small number of learners will meet the requirements for participation on NSCAS-AA. Statewide approximately 1% of students should qualify for the alternate assessment.